

**THE STUDENTS' DIFFICULTIES IN PRONOUNCING THE
ENGLISH VOWELS AT THE SEVENTH GRADE OF SMP N 2
SIMO IN 2017/2018 ACADEMIC YEAR**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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in English Department**

By:

NURHAYATI TANGGA BAROKAH

A320140014

**DEPARTEMEN OF ENGLISH EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA
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APPROVAL

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by:

NURHAYATI TANGGA BAROKAH
A320140014

Approved to be Examined by Consultant:



Drs. Djoko Srijono, M.Hum.

NIP. 195906011985031003




ACCEPTANCE

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BY
NURHAYATI TANGGA BAROKAH
A320140014

Accepted and Approved by Board of Examiners
School of Teacher Training and Education
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta
on May 23, 2019

Team of Examiner:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Drs. Djoko Srijono, M.Hum.
(Head of Examiner) | () |
| 2. Hepy Adityarini, Ph.D
(Member one of Examiner) | () |
| 3. Koesoemo Ratih, Ph.D
(Member two of Examiner) | () |

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The Writer



NURHAYATI TANGGA BAROKAH

A320140014

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan vokal bahasa Inggris yang sulit untuk diucapkan oleh siswa dan faktor yang membuat siswa sulit mengucapkan vokal bahasa Inggris pada kelas 7 SMP N 2 Simo. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Subjek dalam penelitian ini adalah siswa kelas 7 SMP N 2 Simo tahun pelajaran 2018/2019 khususnya kelas 7A dengan jumlah 30 siswa. Data penelitian berasal dari tes pengucapan vokal dan interview. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa SMP N 2 Simo kesulitan mengucapkan beberapa vokal bahasa Inggris yang diucapkan. Vokal bahasa Inggris yang sulit diucapkan siswa diantaranya [æ], [ə], dan [ɜ:]. Diphthong yang sulit diucapkan adalah [eɪ], [aɪ] and [ɔɪ]. Faktor yang membuat siswa kesulitan dalam mengucapkan vokal bahasa Inggris adalah: 1) Gangguan bahasa asli, 2) rendahnya motivasi siswa dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, 3) kurang seringnya pelajaran pengucapan bahasa Inggris 4) suasana pembelajaran yang kurang kondusif.

Kata kunci: pronunciation, kesulitan, huruf vokal

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to describe what vowel sounds are difficult to pronounce by the students and what factors that cause difficulties in pronouncing the English vowels at the seventh grade of SMP N 2 Simo. This research is descriptive qualitative research. The subject of this research was the seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Simo in 2018/2019 academic year namely class 7A that consisted of 30 students. The data in this research were obtained from pronunciation test and interview. The result showed that the students of SMPN 2 SIMO got some English vowel difficult to pronounce. The English vowel sounds which are difficult to pronounce by the students are [æ], [ə], [ɜ:]. And the diphthong sounds difficult to pronounce by the students are [eɪ], [aɪ] and [ɔɪ]. The factors that cause difficulties in pronouncing English vowels are: 1) Native language interference, 2) Students' low motivation in learning English, 3) Infrequent of pronunciation lesson, 4) Unconducive learning atmosphere

Keywords: pronunciation, difficulties, vowels sound

1. INTRODUCTION

Language has an important role in communication, people need to communicate to each other. English as foreign language has been established as important in the world. As an international language, English is very important to make one become successful in mastering science and technology; that's why we still need foreign language.

Even though Indonesian students have been learning English for several years, they still couldn't express their thought in English correctly because there must be some reasons which bring failure of them in mastering English, especially in pronouncing English vowels. The failure originated from difficulties in learning foreign language is caused by the differences between the students' mother tongue and English target language.

The differences above make the students produce so many errors in pronouncing English vowels. They do not know what the native speaker said and they rarely look for the correct vowels in pronunciation, so the students get difficulties in pronouncing the words correctly. The students may face some difficulties in the pronunciation when they find new sounds in the target language. A lot of errors are made by the students especially in pronouncing English vowels, and that problem needs to be solved. For example when the students find the words they did not produce in their mother tongue such as: [ei], [ai], [au], [uə], [eə], [iə], [ɔ:], [u:], [ɔə], [u:], [ɔi] in their mother tongue. Ramely (1996:25) who has conducted a research on pronunciation found that the student errors in pronouncing English vowels are caused by their mother language. The difficulty might be caused by the fact that in Indonesian language has only five vowels and three diphthongs, while English has twelve vowels and nine diphthongs (Anas Syafei, 1988:40). From the arguments above, the researcher concludes that the difficulties in pronouncing the English vowels and diphthongs are that the students are rarely to hear and pronounce the sound and also there are some differences between English vowel and Indonesian vowel.

Based on the previous description, the researcher conducts the research under the title "The Students' Difficulties In Pronouncing The English Vowels At The Seventh Grade Of Smpn 2 Simo In 2017/2018 Academic Year"

2. METHOD

This research is qualitative descriptive research. The object this study was the seventh grade students of SMP N 2 Simo. SMPN 2 Simo is located at Jl.

Pendidikan no.1, Kedung Lengkong, Simo, Kabupaten Boyolali, Jawa Tengah, 7377. The accreditation of this course institution is “A”.

There are two methods of collecting data in this research; they are pronunciation test and interview. Pronunciation test was used to find out the vowel sounds which are difficult to be pronounce by the students. Interview were used to find out the factors that cause difficulties in pronouncing the English vowels.

There were three steps in the technique for analyzing data, they are: 1) Scoring: the scores on every answer that the researcher has collected from the instruments that have been distributed, 2) Tabulating: after scoring stage, the result are transferred in a more concise and easier to analyse, 3) Describing data: to describe the existing data in order to obtain a real form of respondents, making it more understandable by the researcher or someone who is interested in the results of research conducted.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Which English vowel sounds that are found to be difficult to pronounce by the students at the seventh grade of SMPN 2 SIMO?

According to Syaefi (1998: 40); in the experience of teaching English as a foreign language to Indonesian learners for twenty years found that not all vowels and diphthongs are difficult for Indonesian learners. The vowels that difficult to pronounce based on the incorrect percentage are: [æ], [ə], [ɜ:].

The difficult vowels to pronounce are similar to the previous study which was conducted by Mutiara (2014). Her study showed that the finding revealed that most of the errors were in form of substitution and some were in form of addition. There were 11 vowels regarded as the most problematic to pronounce, those were vowels [i:], [I], [e], [æ], [a:], [ɔ:], [u:], [ʊ], [ə], [ʌ] and [ɜ].

The different result is conducted by Elkahir (2014). His study was discussing about English consonants pronounced by Sudanese students. The result is that many Sudanese students have problems in the pronunciation of the

voiceless bilabial [p] and the voice bilabial [b]. The difference of previous study with this research is on the discussion; this research focused on the vowels.

3.2 Which English diphthong sounds that are found to be difficult to pronounce by the students at the seventh grade of SMPN 2 SIMO?

The result showed the difficult diphthongs to pronounce by the students are [eɪ], [aɪ], [ɔɪ]. The similar study by Sutaryatiningsih (2015), in her study the ability in pronouncing English diphthongs was in “fair” category. The researcher found that the difficult diphthong was pronounced by the students is diphthong [ou]. And for the easiest diphthong was pronounce by them is diphthong [au]. The result of the previous study are different from this research.

3.3 What factors cause difficulties in pronouncing English vowels by students at the seventh grade of SMPN 2 SIMO?

The data from interview showed that the students have different factors that cause difficulties in pronouncing English vowels. The first factor is native language interference. According to Lott (1997), errors in the learner’s foreign language can be traced back to the mother tongue. The interview results show that mother tongue is the dominant thing as a factor that cause students’ difficulties in pronouncing English vowel sounds. Based on the result of pronunciation test, many students pronounce the English words according to the order of words same as when they read Indonesian words.

The second factor is Students’ low motivation in learning English. According to Silva (2011), motivation for learning can all support or impede pronunciation skill development. Based on the interview, students’ motivation and students’ attitude are factors that cause difficulties in pronouncing English vowels and diphthongs.

The third factor is infrequent of pronunciation lesson. Based on the interview, the school are rarely to learn pronunciation, the teacher just focused on other discussion such as translating the text and answering the question from the teacher. And when learning the pronunciation, the teacher just focused on the group error. It cause difficulties for some students in pronouncing vowels and diphthongs.

The last factor is uncondusive learning atmosphere. Especially in pronunciation, students need more attention to the lesson. When learning pronunciation, the teacher ask the students to imitate the spoken word/ sentence. That lesson needs good atmosphere, so the students can imitate the correct pronunciation.

The result of the factors that cause difficulties match with the previous study conducted by Elkhair Muhammad (2014). His study concluded some factors caused difficulties such as interference, the differences in the sound system in the two languages, inconsistency of English sounds and spelling militate against Sudanese Students of English (SSEs) competence in pronunciation. Another study by Mutiara (2014) showed that the factors that cause difficulties were the role of native language, the unfamiliarity toward English words, and the lack exposure of English uses.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that the seventh grade students of SMPN 2 Simo in 2017/2018 academic year got some difficulties in pronouncing the English vowel sounds of [æ], [ɑ:], [ə], [ɜ:], and diphthong sounds of [eɪ], [aɪ], [aʊ]. The factors that cause difficulties in pronouncing the English vowels are: 1) Native language interference, 2) Students' low motivation in learning English, 3) Infrequent of pronunciation lesson, and 4) Uncondusive learning atmosphere.

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